

August 7, 2009

Status: Still River Greenway

- Despite initial assurances from our consultant that available funding would adequately cover design and construction of the project, we find ourselves today with insufficient funding to complete either.
- How did this occur? A miscalculation made during the design process necessitated reconfiguration of the bridge required to cross the Still River. The additional cost of the reconfigured bridge blew away the budget, severely limited what could be built with available funds and complicated the administrative process governing the project.
- What miscalculation was made? It was found that the extent of the river's floodway (an area that one cannot build within) was greater than initially thought. This presented a problem as the design for the bridge placed a footing one-tenth of an inch inside the floodway. This necessitated a relocation and redesign of the bridge.
- Review of multiple design alternatives yielded only one option that made sense in terms of the trail's ultimate usability. This option necessitates construction of a larger bridge and adds about \$300,000 to the project's cost.
- Though one would have expected that the recent economic downturn and consequent plunge in the price of materials would have mitigated the impact of the additional costs and kept the project on budget and on track, a recalculation of the project costs by the consultant illustrates that this is not the case. Thus, the project faces serious financial challenges.
- This has spawned two difficulties. First, the DOT, recognizing that insufficient funds for construction are available, put the brakes on the final design process, requiring that the Town demonstrate an ability and a commitment to fund the project. And second, the committee needs to make a "fight or flight" decision – either throw in the towel or forge ahead with an eye toward, redefining the project, demonstrating that it's funded and gaining DOT's approval for initiating a final design that will provide a blueprint for completing the project as funds become available over time.
- The Still River Greenway Committee's thinking is to move forward. And, the recent experience of the Town of Ansonia, CT has created an attractive precedent to follow. Finding their greenway project in much the same position as Brookfield's, Ansonia, with the help of its consultants, was successful in convincing DOT to authorize final design though funding for full construction was not currently available. At present, the committee is pursuing this opportunity. The objective is to complete final design, build whatever can be constructed with available funds, and continue to seek additional funding to complete the project over time.

Respectfully submitted,

The Still River Greenway Committee